

09/933,864
Page 13

REMARKS

The above-listed claim amendments along with the following remarks are fully responsive to the Office Action set forth above. Claims 1, 2, 4-8, 10, 12, 15, 16, 19-22, 24, 25, 27, 28, 30, 31, and 37-43 are amended and claims 9, 26, 35, and 36 are cancelled. New claims 45-61 are added. Claims 1-8, 10-25, 27-34, and 37-61 are pending after entry of this Amendment. No new matter is presented by the claim amendments or the new claims. Support for the new claims may be found in the claims originally filed, and throughout the specification.

The Examiner objected to claims 26-36, 38, 39 and 42-44 as dependent from a rejected base claim, and indicated that the claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Claim 1 is amended to include a sulfonic acid represented by the formula $R-SO_3H$, wherein R is a substituted or unsubstituted hydrocarbyl of 1 to 22 carbon atoms, or a substituted or unsubstituted aryl of 6 to 22 carbon atoms, as was formerly recited in claim 26. Claim 26 is now cancelled. Claims 37 and 40 are also amended to include a sulfonic acid represented by the formula $R-SO_3H$, wherein R is a substituted or unsubstituted hydrocarbyl of 1 to 22 carbon atoms, or a substituted or unsubstituted aryl of 6 to 22 carbon atoms.

The Examiner stated that none of the cited references discloses the use of an infrared sensitive or photothermal conversion material in a negative photoresist with a strong acid. Claim 41 is directed to a method of producing an imaged element from an imageable element comprising a substrate and an imageable composition coated on a surface of the substrate. Claim 41 is amended to recite that the imageable composition includes an infrared absorber or photothermal converter. Support for the amendment can be found in original claims 42 and 43.

Claim 24 is amended to recite that the sulfonic acid is an acid having a pKa of not more than about 5. Support for this amendment can be found in the specification at page 12, lines 14-15.

Other claim amendments are made to more distinctly claim the subject matter that the Applicants regard as their invention.

09/933,864
Page 14

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 112

The Examiner rejected claim 22 as indefinite for improperly limiting the claim from which it depends. Claim 22 is amended to depend from claim 14, rendering the rejection moot. Withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Examiner rejected claims 1-4, 7, 10, 11, 14, 15, 24, 25, 37, 40 and 41 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,416,928 to Ohsawa, *et al.* ("Ohsawa"), or U.S. Patent 6,406,829 to Tachikawa, *et al.* ("Tachikawa").

The Examiner states that both Ohsawa and Tachikawa report imageable compositions having the recited elements.

Independent claims 1, 37, and 40 are amended to recite that the imageable compositions include a sulfonic acid represented by the formula $R-SO_3H$, wherein R is a substituted or unsubstituted hydrocarbyl of 1 to 22 carbon atoms, or a substituted or unsubstituted aryl of 6 to 22 carbon atoms. The cited references do not report imageable compositions comprising the recited sulfonic acid. Therefore, claims 1, 37, and 40, and the claims that depend therefrom, are not anticipated by the cited references. Withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

Claim 41 is amended to recite that the imageable composition includes an infrared absorber or photothermal converter. The Examiner stated that none of the cited references discloses the use of an infrared sensitive or photothermal conversion material in a negative photoresist with a strong acid. Therefore, claim 41 as amended is not anticipated by the cited references. Withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner rejected claims 1-25, 37, 40 and 41 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as unpatentable over U.S. Patent 6,416,928 to Ohsawa, *et al.* ("Ohsawa") or U.S. Patent

09/933,864

Page 15

6,406,829 to Tachikawa, *et al.* ("Tachikawa") in view of U.S. Patent 6,242,101 to Schwalm, *et al.* ("Schwalm").

Independent claims 1, 37, and 40 are amended to include a sulfonic acid represented by the formula $R-SO_3H$, wherein R is a substituted or unsubstituted hydrocarbyl of 1 to 22 carbon atoms, or a substituted or unsubstituted aryl of 6 to 22 carbon atoms.

The cited references, alone or in combination, neither teach nor suggest an imageable composition comprising an acid curable composition, an acid generator, and the recited sulfonic acid. Therefore, claims 1, 37, and 40, and the claims that depend therefrom, are not obvious in view of the cited references. Withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

Claim 41 is amended to recite that the imageable composition includes an infrared absorber or photothermal converter. The Examiner stated that none of the cited references discloses the use of an infrared sensitive or photothermal conversion material in a negative photoresist with a strong acid. Therefore, claim 41 as amended is not obvious in view of the cited references. Withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

09/933,864
Page 16

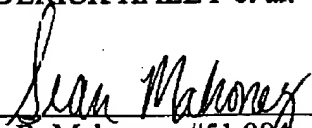
Conclusion

All pending claims are now in condition for allowance. A notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully Submitted,

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